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JrCOSTEP – Summer 2006
Emory University
Billings Area Office IHS

My name is Kristina Pounds. I am a second year Master's student in the Global Environmental Health program at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. This summer I was stationed at the IHS Billings Area Office in Billings, MT, where I worked with Jodee Dennison and Darcy Merchant, the Injury Prevention Specialist and Assistant Specialist in the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering.



This summer I assisted mainly with injury data collection efforts. Availability of local data showing injury trends in the Billings Area is very low, so I assisted in spearheading efforts to get data collection started. I created Epi Info Survey databases and began to install them at the service units. I began a project to calculate the cost of Motor Vehicle Crash Injuries on the Lame Deer reservation, and gathered service unit injury data from the IHS Resource Patient Management System. We also visited 3 of the 6 reservations served by the Billings Area Office, where we met with Tribal Sanitarians and Injury Prevention Coordinators and began to collect data from service unit emergency room logs. I also participated in the Injury Prevention Level 1 training course.

During the weekends my coworkers and I explored Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Glacier national parks and visited many of the historical landmarks in the area. I also spent a weekend at the "Largest tipi gathering in the nation" at the annual Crow Fair powwow and rodeo.

I thoroughly enjoyed learning from and about Native American peoples, their culture, and the health and economic issues that they face. Working with the IHS was a wonderful experience, and I would highly recommend it to anyone in the field of public or environmental health looking for practical working experience.